

Home miss -

A Missionary Church That is Missionary

By

Miss Rhoda Jane Dickinson



CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND PARSONAGE, GLASGOW, MONT.



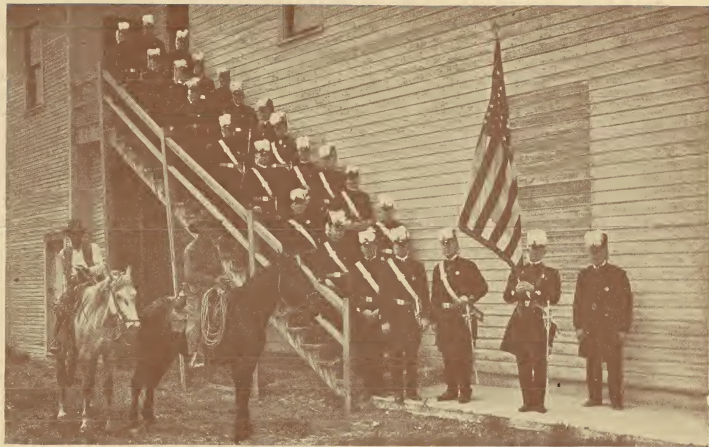
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YOU would like to meet a missionary pastor? Well, stand with me on this corner for a few minutes, and after the congregation has left I will introduce you to one.

“Yes, it is a woman, but not the one who is just coming out. However, I am very glad to tell you about her. Hasn’t she a distinctive personality? It is characteristic of her to be the first person out, for she is one of the busiest women in the state. Her official title is Superintendent of the Home Service Division of the Red Cross, but everybody knows her as a mother with a big heart, and very often that heart has heavy burdens to bear. It is no easy task to be ‘mother,’ not only to the ex-service men but to every discouraged woman and needy child in one of the largest counties in Montana.

“The man now coming down the steps is one of the deacons of the church. He impresses one as being a professor of sociology in some university, and that impression is not far wrong, for sociology is his hobby, although he keeps busy sixteen hours every day in his capacity as superintendent of the town schools. For twelve years he has labored to bring the schools



Members of the Order of Knights Templar - Glasgow, Montana.
Taken after service at the Congregational Church on the Morning of Ascension Sunday

up to the highest possible standard, and his work has been crowned with success. The moral and physical development of the child is never overlooked nor the recreational side of his education neglected. Very frequently, during the school year, the large high school auditorium is crowded with people assembled to see the rendition of an operetta or a clever farce. At other times audiences gather to watch a match game of basket-ball or to attend a Father and Son's banquet given by the Boy Scouts or a Mother and Daughter's supper sponsored by the girls of the Camp Fire groups.

"The superintendent's wise judgment, his calmness and poise, his kindliness and sympathy, have made him a tower of strength, not only to the boys and girls who have come to recognize his superior worth, but more than one discouraged city, county or church worker has come away from his office with the consciousness of having been for a little while in a place where anything unworthy or trivial does not enter and where only the big, fundamental, worth-while things of life are considered.

"That boyish-looking fellow with him is, I am confident, the best-loved man in all the county. He is the County Agricultural Agent. When the farmers experience crop failure after crop failure for four successive years, and see their labor come to naught, while mortgages on houses and lands are falling due, they need something more than seed

loans and advice to help them keep up their courage. The County Agent knows how to give them just what they need.

“With him and his wife is the County Home Demonstration Agent. She is doing for the women of the county what the Agricultural Agent is doing for the men. As she goes on her long trips day after day, she finds crowds of women awaiting her in each place she visits. They realize that the thousands of quarts of vegetables in their cellars, and the hundreds of pounds of cheese on their shelves are there largely because of her sympathetic helpfulness. Moreover, the contact with other women which coming together for discussion of matters of common interest brings about tends to remove something of the dulness from rather isolated lives. These county meetings are doing as much for our rural communities as the neighborhood houses in the cities do for the people whom they serve.

“That group of young business men includes members of the church board of trustees who also help in the Sunday School work. If you go into any of their places of business tomorrow, you will find that their religion is of the practical kind. It is the sort of religion that is as evident in a lodge, on an advisory board, or in American Legion work as in the Sabbath services. Their wives are young college women who are bringing much of constructive leadership into various organizations of

the church as well as into the social activities of the town.

"See the nurses from the hospitals. They are not able to attend services on every occasion, but when they do come we are inspired when we think of their daily ministrations of love.

"Next you see a number of young married people who have not been coming to the services very long. Until recently they had given much time to social affairs, but on Easter Day they pledged their allegiance to Christ, and they are going to be a real influence in the work.

"Here are the members of the choir, many of them teachers in the schools. With them is their beloved leader, a young woman of exceptional talent, whose ability as a pianist and choir leader has made the church music popular with townspeople. These folks greatly appreciate the privilege of attending an occasional cantata or Sabbath evening concert.

"The missionary pastor is just coming over. She will smile when you tell her you are glad to meet the missionary of a western church, but from the way she will grasp your hand you will know she is somewhat moved. 'Oh, there are two dozen missionaries in this church,' she will say, 'only they don't know it. I am only the missionary who wears the preaching gown and gives the sermon on Sabbath morning.'"

The Congregational Home Missionary Society
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New York